

Historical Notes and Reminiscences of Early Times in Oregon

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Maritime and Land Expeditions. The First Civilized Man, etc.

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America was discovered by Columbus in 1492. In 1532 forty years after, the coast of the American continent had been explored from the Gulf of Mexico on the Atlantic side to the Strait of Magellan; discovered and crossed in 1519 ; and on the Pacific side, from the same strait to the river of Culiacan, which empties into the Gulf of California in north latitude of 24 deg. 30 min. Northward of this point , nothing as yet was known of the vast region which was destined to teem with so many millions of human beings.

In 1534 Ximenes reached latitude 37 deg (Santa Cruz bay, north of Monterey) ; while going on shore in the vicinity he was murdered together with 20 of his companions, by the natives. The vessel was taken back to the Mexican waters by the survivors.

In 1536, Hernando Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico, in 1520, forming a resolution of making in person a final attempt, started from Chiametia on the coast of New Spain, steered for the port on the coast where Ximenes had met his death. He reached the place, entered the bay,

Discovered by Ximenes  
and landed on upper California soil in the beginning of June, thereby earning for himself the honor of being, after Ximenes, the second discoverer of this part of the American continent. He was accompanied by several ecclesiastics. Up to 1578 , the Spaniards were the principal actors in prosecuting discoveries along the Pacific Coast. Expeditions were fitted out by Hernando Cortez, and by his successor in the vice-royalty of Mexico. Don Antonio Mendoza, penetrating northward from time to time, touching at various points along the



coast, but making no important discoveries.

In 1539 Francisco de Ullao, under the direction of Mendoza, sailed from Acapulco north, for the purpose of ascertaining the situation and extent of that country, which by this time began to be called California. He discovered that California was a continuity of the American continent.

In 1542 Rodriguez Cabrillo sighted the California shores on the 2d July, and anchored at a cape which he called San Lucas. Thence continuing his voyage, he touched at different points along the coast, and

Took possession

of the country in his majesty's name, and in September entered an excellent land-locked harbor which he called San Miguel, a name later changed into that of San Diego which, in latitude 32 deg. 50 min., divides Upper from Lower California. From San Miguel, Cabrillo continued his examination as far as port of Los Pinos called later by the name of Monte Rey (Mount King) where he was taken ill and died on the island of San Bernardo, January 6, 1543

In 1543, his pilot, Bartholomew Ferrelo, took charge of the vessel and in March advanced as far up as latitude 43 deg., (Oregon coast half way between Cape Blanco and the Coquille river); but in consequence of the suffering of his crew from cold, fatigue and want of proper nourishment, he resolved to proceed no further northward and accordingly directed his course toward the south. Thus to Cabrillo is due the honor of being the ~~first~~ third to land on the shores of Upper California, and to Ferrelo that of being the first to coast along the shores of Oregon.

In 1564 another expedition was dispatched by the Spanish Government whose commander was Andreas Urdaneta, the author of a chart which was subsequently used by the Spaniards for a century or more.

In 1575, the tranquility which the Spaniards had enjoyed hitherto in



prosecuting their voyages along the northern coast, and in trading with the east, was for the first time rudely disturbed. Inflamed by the accounts given of the Spanish possessions and hoping to enrich themselves by a system of plunder, a body of reckless English adventurers, commanded by one Oxenham, constructed a vessel on the Pacific coast in 1575 with which they attempted to lay waste the Spanish possessions. Their depredations were not of any duration for they were almost immediately arrested by the authorities and executed for their crimes. Their punishment, though severe, was insufficient to prevent others from following their steps.

In 1579, an English captain, afterward Sir Francis Drake, appeared on the coast after having pillaged the Spanish possession of Chili, Peru and Guatemala (for which he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth) and proceeded to the north as high as the 43d degree (Oregon coast);

but finding the weather cold and boisterous and knowing that his ship needed repairing before he could return to England, he retraced his steps (according to my notes) as far back as 38th degree, and entered a bay which was later discovered and called San Francisco, where he passed the winter; but according to others, he did not enter the Golden Gate but landed at Point Reyes, which lies north of Port St. Francis where he took possession of the country in her majesty's name.

In 1582 Francis Galí, a Spaniard on returning from Manila and Macao, made a reconnoissance of the west coast as far north as the 57th degree of latitude (about Queen Charlotte's Island.) To him was near being due the honor of discovering the bay of San Francisco, for, in his account of the voyage he tells us that while descending the coast he witnessed the sea covered with numerous debris, evidently the result of periodical rains by which numerous objects were carried out into the ocean.

In 1592, Juan de Fuca, being sent by the viceroy, sailed as far



north as the 38th degree, where he entered a strait and anchored in a large body of water <sup>the</sup> (the straits which bear his name) being attacked by numerous bodies of Indians, he returned to open sea and thence to Acapulco (17th south degree) and reported his success to the viceroy.

In the beginning of 1596, an expedition consisting of three vessels, entrusted to the care of Sebastian Viscaíno started from Acapulco in order to protect the Spanish possessions of the Pacific coast against the p. 3 English marauders, there being on board four Franciscans. The fleet put into the islands of Mazatlan; thence proceeded to Santa Cruz bay, where Viscaíno remained for a couple of months during which time the fathers made every effort to give the aborigines some elementary notions of the Christian religion. And, for some reason, abandoning his enterprise, Viscaíno returned to Acapulco in October.

Six years later, in ~~1592~~ 1602, Admiral Viscaíno headed another expedition for a like object, at the command of Philip III. He was accompanied on this occasion by three Carmelite fathers. They put into various ports along the coast; the fathers had thereby full opportunities to meet the Indians and embrace them all in the most affectionate manner.

On the 10th of December they entered the harbor of San Miguel, then for the first time called San Diego by Viscaíno. From San Diego he visited port Los Pinos, which he called Monte Rey and thence proceeded to about the 43d degree of latitude, one degree up the coast of Oregon. <sup>But</sup> finding the weather unfavorable and some of his men suffering from scurvy and other diseases he altered his course and returned to Mexico, where he arrived April 26th, 1603. It appears from this date, the coast was no more visited during the 17th nor until the first half of the 18th century.



In 1769 on the 14th of July, two days before the establishment of the new mission of San Diego, an expedition commanded by Don Gaspar Portola according to the instructions from the Governor, set out by land to discover and settle the port of Monterey, so called by Viscaino, in 1602. It was composed of 55 persons, including the Fathers, soldiers and 15 Indians of Lower California. There remained two Fathers and eight soldiers at San Diego as a guard. From one cause or another, they did not recognize the port of Monterey; but continued their journey with the same object, and at a distance of 40 leagues (120 miles) further on, they came to a magnificent bay, which they called San Francisco, in honor of the great St. Francis, the illustrious founder of the Franciscan Order.

In 1774 the Spanish frigate Santiago under the command of Juan Perez, was ordered to proceed on an exploring expedition as far north as was practicable. Two fathers accompanied the expedition. They set sail in June and proceeded as far north as the 55th degree of north latitude (about Queen Charlotte's Island). where they put into a bay and anchored there. Thence they returned to Monterey and carefully reconnoitering the coast on the way. As their object was not the establishment of missions they did not land at any part of the coast; yet they had sufficient opportunities to observe the natives and speak to them, as they were coming to them in canoes for the purpose of bartering their Indian goods.

In 1775 a second expedition was undertaken at the command of the viceroy with orders to examine the coast still further, to the end of finding a suitable port for establishing a mission and the standard of the cross; the expedition, which was accompanied by two Fathers, sailed in the same frigate Santiago commanded this time by Don Bruno de Heceta, a captain of the royal ~~navy~~ navy. It put to sea from the port of San Blas toward the middle of March, being attended by a schooner under the command of Francis Bodega after whom the bay



of that name was called. Upon proceeding northward as far as the 41st degree of latitude they came to anchor in a place which they called Trinidad Bay (north of Humboldt habbor), where they found the natives friendly and affable. Seeing that this place was well p 4 suited for a missionary establishment they took formal possession of it on April 17th by erecting a cross, a "Missa cantata" a sermon and the solemn chanting of the "Te Deum". Thence they continued their voyage till they reached the 47th degree, where they also anchored in a commodious harbor (probably Gray's harbor north of Chehalis) and took possession of the country by erecting a cross on the shore. The commander of the frigate still continued north as high up as the 48th or 49th degree; then turned east and soon saw land, probably the south side of Vancouver's Island, at the entrance of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Coming southward he came to anchor inside of a small island near the main land. He sent some of his men on shore in search of water, and while in the discharge of their duty, they were surrounded by the savages and immediately murdered. At the same place, and in the same manner, 12 years afterward, some of the crew of an English ship were destroyed and by them the place was called Destruction Island; it is about one degree below Cape Flattery. After this disaster Don Bruno de Haceta continued southward along the coast as far as 46 degrees 16 minutes where he saw a vast opening in the land, which appeared to be a harbor, or the mouth of some river. It is related that he tried to enter it, but being prevented by a strong current, which opposed his progress, he retraced his steps and called the river Rio San Roch, and the promontory which commands bay (copy) Cape of Assumption in honor of Mary, Star of the Sea-which names soon appeared in the Spanish maps. Don Bruno de Haceta and his companions were, no doubt, the first civilized men that ever saw the mouth of the Columbia.



During the same year another Spanish navigator, by the name of ~~Eng~~ Bodega, made the Oregon coast about 30 miles south of the Columbia River. The land first seen by him was the high promontory now known as Tillamook Head--called by the Spaniards Cape Mizari. Bodega examined the coast from this point to Cape Mendocino, so called ~~by~~ from Viceroy Mendoza (south of Humboldt City, in search of a large river, and to have been seen by Daguiar in 1603 ((no close parenth.)) But not succeeding in his attempts he took his departure from this part of the coast and returned to Monterey.

In 1778 the celebrated Captain Cook, an English navigator, made land on the Oregon coast near the 42d degree of latitude, but by the violence of storms was driven still further south. However the wind becoming more favorable, he proceeded on his course to the northward and on the 22d of March he found himself in sight of the coast, a little beyond the 48th degree. The land here discovered by Cook was the projecting point of the continent at the entrance of the strait of Juan de Fuca which he called Cape Flattery and continuing north as high up as latitude 49 degrees 30 minutes, he cast anchor in a spacious and secure ~~harbor~~ harbor which afterwards was called Nootka Sound. Here he continued several weeks during which he held constant intercourse with the Indians, who appeared to be no strangers to white men. A British station was established at Nootka in 1780.

In 1779 the Viceroy being yet unsatisfied as to the result of the expedition of Don Bruno de Haceta, immediately resolved upon another. This expedition which was commanded by Don Ignatius Astiago and accompanied by two Fathers was composed of two vessels. It started from San Blas on the 12th of February. By the 3rd of May they had proceeded as far north as the 55th degree of latitude when they entered the islands opposite to what is now British America.



p. 3

Then they carefully examined the coast for a couple of months, but not finding the strait they had been looking for, they continued their course until they reached the 60th degree (north of Sitka) where they entered an extensive port. To this place they gave the name of Santiago. (It may have been Cook's Inlet) Before their departure they fixed a cross in an elevated position after first carrying it in position and chanting the "Vexilla Regis." This frigate was visited by <sup>numbers</sup> ~~many~~ of Indians, who came out to them in canoes, and bartered their goods for whatever articles the Spaniards were willing to give them. The captain having given orders for home, they were soon descending the coast. Passing the port of Santiago they encountered a terrible storm for twenty-hours, harassed by darkness and a most cruel anxiety, after which they found themselves surrounded by reefs from which they were miraculously saved by their fervent recourse to the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary.

In 1788 Lieut. John Meares, an Englishman, fitted out an expedition at Macao for the purpose of discovering the harbor, or reef or rather the opening which was first seen by Don Bruno de Haceta in 1775. He entered the strait of Juan de Fuca in June and sailing in a southerly course, discovered what he called Cape Shoalwater. A high bluff promontory bore off southeast, at a distance of only 4 leagues (12 miles for which he steered in double, with the hope of finding some sort of harbor. He now discovered distant land beyond this promontory which he expected to be the Cape of Assumption of Don Bruno de Haceta. By half past eleven he doubled this cape at a distance of three miles, having a clear and perfect view of the shore in every part. A prodigious easterly swell rolled on the shore, and the sounding gradually decreased from forty to sixteen fathoms on a hard sandy bottom. After he had rounded the promontory, a large bay opened to his view where he expected to



find the river San Roch of Haceta. <sup>A</sup>s he steered in the water shoaled nine eight, and seven fathoms, when breakers were seen from the deck right ahead and from the masthead they were observed to extend across the bay. He therefore, at the sight, hauled out and directed his course to the opposite shore to see if there was any channel or if he could discover any port. Failing in his attempt and expectations he called the bay Deception Bay and the promontory Cape Disappointment and denied the existence of Rio San Roch.

In 1789 while the two American ships the Columbia and Washington were in this part of the ocean, there was a considerable difficulty between the Spaniards and the English in reference to which had the best right to the country in the vicinity of Nootka Sound. In the settlement of this difficulty the captains of the aforesaid vessels took an active and efficient part; and from an understanding of the whole affair were of the opinion that from a previous discovery and occupancy, the Spanish claims were well founded and that the possession of the country was an unjustifiable arrogancy on the part of the British. In this state of things the two parties had their men of war on the ocean in 1789. Martinez and Narvaez of the Spanish squadron, after plying several months on the coast, captured two English vessels and took possession of the Nootka. The Columbia and Washington continued on the coast until August, 1789 when Captain Gray proceeded in the Columbia to China and the United States, with all the furs that had been collected. Captain ~~Kendrick~~ Kenderick remained on the coast in the Washington. p. 6

In 1790 Captain Gray accomplished his voyage in safety; and on the 27th of September 1790, he again left Boston in the same ship for the northwest coast and sometime in May, 1791, struck land a little north of Cape Mendocino, California, or near the 41st degree of north latitude. While proceeding northward toward Nootka captain Gray discovered an opening in the shore of considerable length,



in latitude 46 deg, 16 min. from which issued a strong current preventing his entrance. He continued off this opening for nine days with an intention , if possible, to enter it, but the strength of the breakers and probably from the appearance of the breakers which previously had frightened Lieut. Mears, he was unable ~~to~~ at this time to accomplish his object. Though convinced that he had discovered the mouth of a great river, without waiting longer for an opportunity to enter it, he proceeded to the north, and in June arrived at Nootka Sound. From this point Gray continued his course north and after making some important discoveries in the vicinity of Queen Charlotte's Island returned to the Clioquot, near Nootka where he continued during the winter.

In 1790 and 1791 , ~~and~~ other expeditions took place until the news came that, by the treaty of Oct. 28, 1790, Spain had ceded to England all her rights over Nootka and the whole country. The publication of Captain Cook's travels about this time having made known that the coast abounded with sea otters so much prized in China, the news drew hence a good many traders of all nations.

In 1792 more than twenty vessels were plying on the Pacific coast from California in the most septentrional latitudes and driving trade with the Indian tribes. Of the number was the American ship Columbia , Captain Gray, who in the Spring had left his place at Clioquot for southward. In his interview with Captain Vancouver who was going northward Captain Gray informed him that the previous summer he had been off the mouth of a river in latitude 46 deg and 16 min; wher the outlet was so strong as to prevent him from entering for nine days. Captain Vancouver, who had seen the coast from Cape Mendocino without finding any opening or river disbelieved the fact stated to him and under this impression he proceeded on to the north while Captain Gray to assure himself of the reality of his discovery of a great river resolved , if possible



to enter it with his ship. While proceeding southward he entered a harbor which he called Bulfinch's harbor, but passing on he ~~arrived~~ arrived May 11, 1792, opposite the promontory which Capt. Meares had called Cape Disappointment and the Bay which he had named the Bay of Deception.

Though the breakers presented a formidable obstacle before them and they did not know but that they were rushing to inevitable destruction, yet Captain Gray and his gallant comrades dashed bravely on and discovering a narrow passage through the breakers, passed them in safety, and as Gray had anticipated, found themselves in a large river of freshwater up which they proceeded a distance of twenty miles ~~plus~~ probably up to Tongue Point Channels. The natives flocked around the strangers and manifested the utmost surprise at what they saw and heard. After having continued in the river eight days making repairs, trading with the Indians, etc. Captain Gray again passed the breakers at the entrance through the intricate channel, prepared to announce to the world the most important discovery that was made on the northwest coast. Before taking his departure he bestowed the name of his vessel upon the majestic river which he discovered calling it Columbia.

P. 7

He also called Cape Hancock the Cape Disappointment of Meares and Point Adams, the low point of the south side. From the mouth of the river Gray returned to the north and in the vicinity of Queen Charlotte's island while his vessel was under full sail she struck a rock ~~in~~ and received so great an injury that she was near foundering, but he finally succeeded in getting her into Nootka where her damage was soon repaired. Here he found a Spaniard who had charge of the establishment. It was about the time that Captain Vancouver in command of a brig and a corvette being on his way to Nootka to take possession of it in the name of the English



government, found there the captain of the Spanish vessel Don Juan de la Bodega dit Quadra, empowered by Spain to execute the treaty of October 28, 1790. Hence, on the occasion of the reunion of the two commanders the great island north of the straight was called Quadra Vancouver.